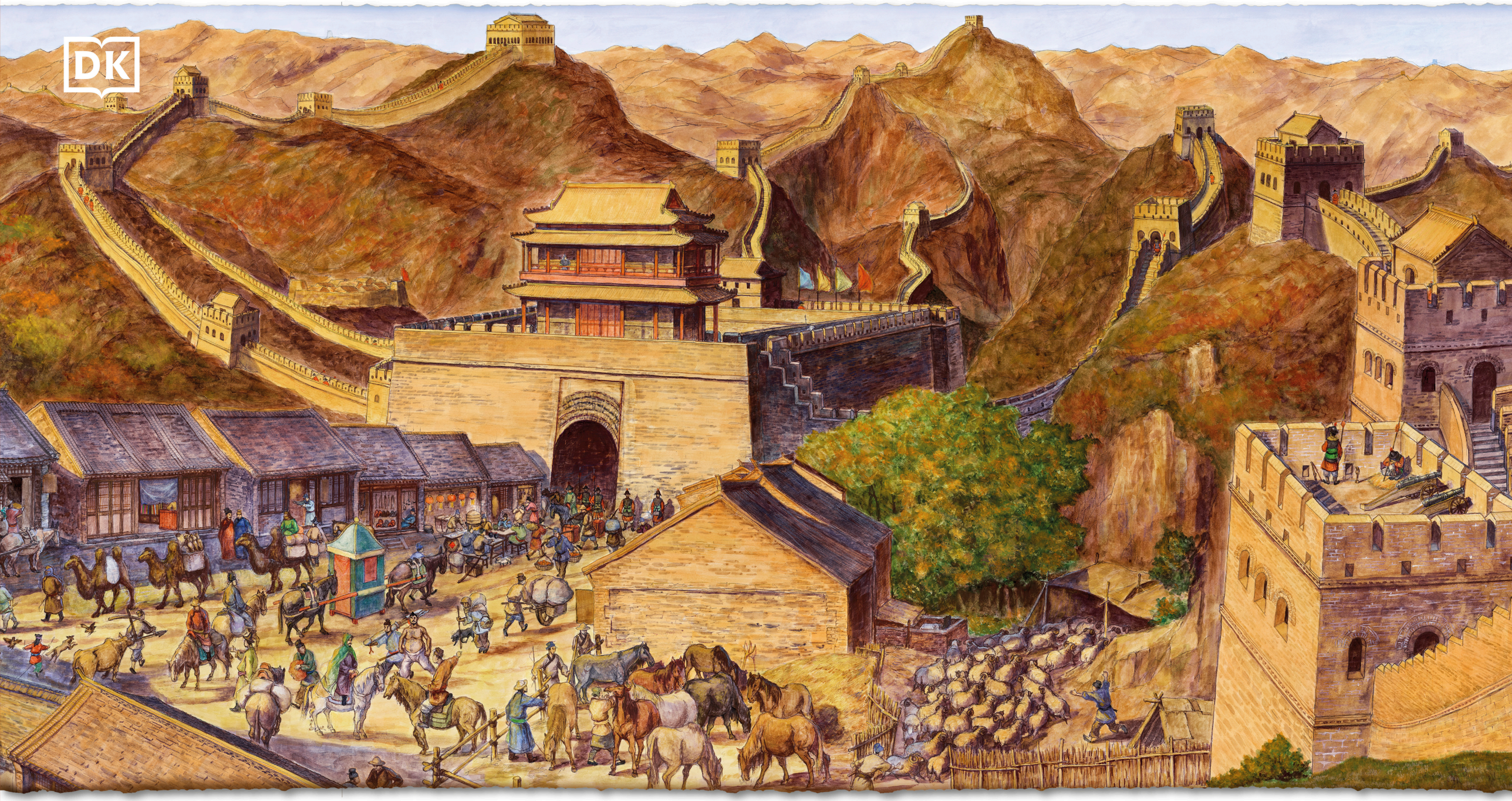

THE GREAT WALL THROUGH TIME

A 2,700-YEAR JOURNEY ALONG THE WORLD'S GREATEST WALL

ILLUSTRATED BY **DU FEI**

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DK

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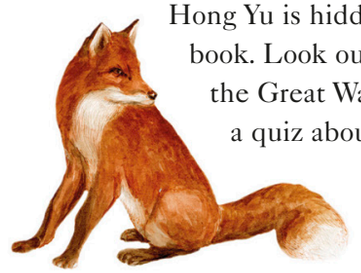
Hong Yu the fox

This is Hong Yu, the red fox. Like most foxes, she is clever and cunning – and always hungry. But Hong Yu also has a secret: she can travel through time!



Hong Yu is hidden in every picture of the book. Look out for her as you travel along the Great Wall, and turn to page 39 for a quiz about her adventures.

The Story of the Great Wall

The Great Wall of China is one of the most incredible building feats in history. It stretches for 21,196km (13,170 miles), snaking across barren deserts and rugged mountains.

In fact, the Great Wall isn't really one wall at all. It's a whole series of walls, built at different times by different dynasties (ruling families) over thousands of years.

So who built the wall (or walls), and why? For centuries, China's biggest threat came from the north, where nomadic tribesmen often swept down on horseback to raid Chinese villages and farms.

China's first emperor ordered the first Great Wall in 214 BCE to keep out these enemy horsemen. Later emperors built new walls as China's borders shifted this way and that. In time, the Great Wall developed other uses, too. Armies could be transported along it and, as trade developed, it was used to tax goods brought in and out along the Silk Road.

Eventually, the wall was no longer useful and it fell into disrepair. But many sections still survive today. Together, they make up the longest structure ever built.

Join us as we explore this amazing ancient wonder. Our story will transport you through almost 2,700 years of history, stopping off to take in some of the key events in China's past. You'll witness epic battles and meet many colourful characters, from emperors and generals to the everyday folk who built and worked along the wall. Turn the page, and begin an exciting trip through time!

Map of the Great Wall

Chariots are an important attack vehicle. Each one carries three armed warriors.

The Chu build watchtowers on hilltops to keep a lookout for invaders.

The First Long Wall
Nanyang, 656 BCE

In the centuries before China is unified, its many warring small kingdoms build protective walls to keep out invaders. The kingdom of Chu has emerged as a powerful state and erected a long wall to mark its new frontier. Duke Huan, ruler of the rival Qi state, forms a military alliance with four other states to threaten the Chu. He leads the troops to the walled fortress at Nanyang to meet Qu Wan, a Chu politician. As they ride along the ramparts, Qu Wan persuades the duke to withdraw his troops. The Chu long wall has proved a military masterstroke.

Watchtower

Tower

Battle platform

Chu flags

Lu state army

Qi state army

Duke Huan and Qu Wan

Battle chariot

Nobles and important officials ride in chariots pulled by four horses to demonstrate their high-ranking status.

Duke Huan boasts to Qu Wan about the size of his army. In reply, Qu Wan points out the walled fortress's mighty defences.

Guards can throw heavy boulders down the chute onto attackers.

The five armies in Duke Huan's alliance proudly bear the flags of their state.

These two young guards are nervous on their first day guarding the battlements. Can you find them?

Chariot riders grip the vehicle's wooden bar for safety as they ride over bumps.

Soldiers wear protective tunics made up of overlapping pieces of leather.

Can you see a worker who has slipped over in the mud?

The soldiers guarding the wall are missing their families. They're a long way from home.

A Single Barrier

Inner Mongolia, 210 BCE

Under Emperor Qin Shi Huang, China is now unified. To protect his empire from nomadic invaders from the north, Qin appoints General Meng Tian to join up the defences built by earlier kingdoms into a single barrier. Meng Tian assembles a massive workforce of soldiers, labourers, and convicts to build the new wall, and today is leading the emperor's son Fusu on an inspection tour. For the workers, forced to toil in all weathers with little to eat, conditions are harsh.

Labourers

Border guards

Wall under construction

Meng Jiangnu, a widow

Engineers

Meng Jiangnu weeps for her dead husband, a worker. According to legend, her tears caused part of the wall to collapse.

The stones are cut flat, so they can be laid on top of one another.

The wall's chief engineer shows that he is pleased with the construction work.

The donkey is complaining at being forced to carry such a heavy load up a steep slope.

The soldiers and workers sleep in tents pitched by the wall.

Yin Mountains

Soldiers' camp

Battlements

Canopy

Fu

Prince Fusu

Meng Tian

Cavalry

Supervisor

Prince Fusu has been put in charge of defending the frontier by the emperor.

A man cooks his dinner in a *fu*, an early type of wok.

The cavalry wear lightweight armour so they can move swiftly if there is an attack.

The emperor's flag is flying high to boost morale – but it isn't working.

A cartload of gifts is being sent to the Xiongnu leader.

Watchtower

Emperor Gaozu's flag

Soldiers' quarters

Han soldiers

Long wall

Emperor Gaozu

Chen Ping

Emperor Gaozu's bodyguard

Xiongnu cavalry

Emperor Gaozu's chariot

Cart loaded with gifts

Lou Jing

Lou Jing, Emperor Gaozu's chief spy at the frontier, warned him of Modun's trap, but the emperor ignored his advice.

Emperor Gaozu is the founder of the Han Dynasty.

Chen Ping, an important advisor, has hatched a plan to bribe Modun with jewels and gold.

Modun Shanyu is drinking wine in his large *ger* (tent) with his wife.

The Xiongnu cavalry are in high spirits. They are ready to fight.

Siege at Mount Baideng
Pingcheng, 200 BCE

The Qin Dynasty has fallen, and following a period of chaos Liu Bang has emerged victorious as China's leader – he is now Emperor Gaozu. But his grip on power is weak. The nomadic tribes on the northern frontier have united as the Xiongnu. Their wily leader, Modun Shanyu, has lured the emperor and his army north of the long wall to frozen Mount Baideng. Here, the Xiongnu cavalry trap the frostbitten Chinese troops in a week-long siege. The emperor's advisors work hard to secure their release, and the two sides eventually agree to respect the wall as the barrier between them.

Modun Shanyu

Xiongnu cavalry

Han soldiers

Fearful of what the future holds, one soldier writes a letter home to his wife and children to tell them he loves them.

Can you find a messenger riding to tell Modun of Emperor Gaozu's offer?

The Han troops are cold and hungry. They haven't eaten for a week.

The fortress defends the Hexi Corridor, which lies on the Silk Road trade route that links China to Europe.

Wrestling is good training for hand-to-hand combat.

The high jump helps improves strength and agility.

Frame for hoisting lanterns and flags

Juyan Fortress

Fortress guards

Competition judge

Tijianzi (shuttlecock kicking)

Horse racing

Wrestling

High jump

Long jump

Firewood

Firelighting tools

Beacon tower

Horseback archery

Material for burning

Shrine

Army musicians

Guard on duty

Sleeping quarters for soldiers

In *tijianzi*, players keep the shuttlecock in the air using any part of the body except their hands.

Can you spot a rider barely clinging on to the reins?

Troops rake a strip of fine sand so they can detect enemy footprints at night.

A soldier proves his strength by lifting his regiment's cooking cauldron.

Military Games
Inner Mongolia, 99 BCE

At the Juyan border fortress all eyes are on the annual military games. Beneath the high beacon tower, two teams are locked in a tug of war. Elsewhere, there's polo, archery, martial arts, and horse racing. The games are fun, but they're also valuable military training for the soldiers of Emperor Wudi. Under his rule, the Han Dynasty has expanded China's territory and rebuilt Meng Tian's old walls, which now extend all the way west to the Gobi Desert.

Raked sand

Polo

Archery contest

Weight training

Pole climbing

Tug of war

Cavalry practice

Longbow

Chuiwan (ancient golf)

Cuju (ancient football)

Wooden spikes

Archery practice

Crossbow training

One group of soldiers is playing *cuju*, an athletic ball-kicking sport that is similar to modern football.

Sharp spikes are laid to prevent invaders climbing the tower.

Archers must master the crossbow, a lethal weapon against Xiongnu raids.

Dancers form a circle around a pile of empty water pitchers to pray for rain.

Monks heave the big Buddha statue into place for the presentation.

Return of a Hero

Kucha, 644 CE

It's the height of summer and, for the small Buddhist kingdom of Kucha (in modern-day Xinjiang), a day of wild celebration. After many years away, the famous monk Xuanzang is passing through on his way back to China, and is greeted with a hero's welcome. The rulers of the Tang Dynasty, under which China is enjoying a golden age of peace and prosperity, have chosen today to present the people of Kucha with a gift – a giant Buddha statue – to show their friendship. As the festivities unfold, the locals splash water over one another to cool themselves down.

Tian Shan Mountains

Watchtower

Crop fields

Pilgrims

Walled fortress

Moat

Rain dance

Buddha statue

Parasol

Xuanzang

Servant

Dancing troupe

Drummer

Monks

King of Kucha

The walled fortress of Kucha is one of many defences built to protect the Silk Road.

The drummer beats out the dance's rhythm on her double-ended drum.

Xuanzang is returning home after 15 years studying Buddhism in India.

The Queen of Kucha enjoys the grand spectacle from the top of the city gate.

The queen's ladies-in-waiting scatter flowers on the revellers below.

Sun shelter
Queen of Kucha
Musicians
Observation tower
Ladies-in-waiting
Battlements
Buddhist temples
Gate to the walled fortress
Noblemen
Dancing troupe
Musicians
Leaping dancers
Kucha guard
Servants
Courtiers
Drawbridge

Splash! Can you spot these two strangers hurling water over each other? It's the best way to keep cool.

Out of respect, the king takes off his crown and boots to greet Xuanzang.

Performers juggle brightly coloured bowls to entertain the nobles.

As well as supervising the building work, Wanyan Zongbi is training the soldiers for frontier duty.

Can you spot the soldiers' children flying kites?

The Barrier in the Grasslands
Heilongjiang, 1138CE

In the remote northeastern grasslands, the Jurchen people of the Jin Dynasty dig trenches and build a wall to fend off Mongol attacks. Right now, however, the thud-thud-thud of the workers' tools is accompanied by a stranger sound. Beside the wall, a group of shamans – priests or healers who the Jurchen believe can speak to the spirit world – are performing a ritual dance. As the air fills with their drum beats and cries, the spectacle draws a crowd. But Wanyan Zongbi, the military commander in charge of construction, doesn't mind. He believes the shamans will give his soldiers supernatural powers and inspire the workers to build faster.

Soldiers' tents
Wanyan Zongbi
Cavalry training
Outer trench
Inner trench
Jin Great Wall
Field kitchen
Chef
Totem pole
Labourers
Dung pile
Messenger
Cart
Shamans dancing

In the field kitchen, the chef stands on top of the huge earthenware oven to mix the ingredients in the wok.

The shamans dance around the totem pole. They wear colourful costumes with copper mirrors and bells attached, and headdresses of animal horns or fur.

Cow dung is dried in the sun and burnt as fuel.

Many Jurchen people are nomadic herders and live in large, circular tents.

Shaped like the long face of a horse, these battle platforms are used to shoot attackers who breach the other defences.

Outer wall

Inner wall

Dung pile

Jurchen tents

Shepherd

Corner turret

Border castle

"Horse face" battle platform

Scaffolding

Moat

Winch for hauling up water

Measuring tools

Water barrel

The workers dig deep trenches to stop the Mongol cavalry's horses.

The earth dug to make the trench is piled up to build the wall.

Mongol traders transport their goods in wooden ox carts.

The grain stores will be a target for thieves if the harvest fails, so they are closely guarded.

Families farm plots of land along the Great Wall.

A newborn has her first glimpse of the outside world.

Yan Mountains

Watchtower

Main wall

Watchtower

Beacon tower

Granaries

Local government offices

Wheat field

Civilian quarters

Cowshed

Merchant's tent

Water cart

Cattle trader

Ox cart

Cavalry patrol

A recently married couple step out of their carriage. They are visiting the bride's family.

Can you find a bull scratching his back?

For travellers approaching from afar, the Cloud Platform appears to rise up from the clouds. Images of Buddhist gods and goddesses are carved around the arch.

The Ming Great Wall
Juyong Pass, 1571 CE

Haunted by a century under Mongol control, China's Ming rulers have rebuilt and strengthened the Great Wall, and it is now more invincible than ever. Just a few hours' gallop from Beijing, the fortress at the Juyong mountain pass has suffered Mongol attacks in the past, but these days life is peaceful. In the golden sunshine of an autumn afternoon, a steady stream of travellers make their way through the arch beneath the pass's old stone Cloud Platform, while out in the fields, farm workers bring in the harvest to prepare for winter.

Buddhist temple
Library
Marble railings
Cloud Platform
Leather shop
Farming tools shop
Teahouse
Drying vegetables
Drying fruit
Tannery
Dried maize
Dried meat
Dried chillies
Water well
Maize store

A farm worker lays out fruit to be air-dried on the hot roof. It will make a delicious snack.

Animal skins are dried to make leather at the tannery.

The largest watchtower on the Great Wall, the Nine-Eyed Tower has nine windows on each side.

Can you spot a little piglet that has lost her way?

Nine-Eyed Tower

Jiankou Great Wall

Gate tower

Horse barrier

Barracks

Arrow tower

Silk shop

Guesthouse

Saddle shop

Restaurant

Guards

Camel train

Farmer

Spy

Horse trader

Pigsty

Sheep pen

A spy in the emperor's secret police is questioning travellers coming through the gate.

The strong horses bred in the north have a high value at market.

An off-duty sentry is snoozing in the afternoon sunshine.

The large brick watchtowers have space for soldiers to sleep and store their weapons and provisions.

Yan Mountains

Sentry tower

Cannons

Shield walls

Arrow slits

Battlements

Interior of a watchtower

Beacon tower

Training area

The Ming Great Wall *continued*

Juyong Pass, 1571 CE

There's always plenty going on at the Juyong Pass. To protect Beijing, a large garrison is permanently stationed here. Up on the battlements, sentries scan the horizon for signs of trouble, while the soldiers down in the parade ground are training hard. Since the Ming gained control of territory north of the wall, Juyong Pass has been an important trading hub. Merchants and traders pass through all day long, but they must stop at the main gate tower to have their goods inspected and taxed. For some travellers, the pass makes an ideal place to pause for a bite to eat or a bed for the night.

Shield walls give defenders extra protection from attackers who have climbed onto the wall.

Below the beacon tower, soldiers are practising their archery skills.

An overseer pleads with Qi Jiguang to allow more time to finish his work.

The bricks are baked slowly at a high temperature in underground kilns.

The Ming Great Wall *continued*

Gubeikou, 1571 CE

When Mongol raiders last swooped down to attack Beijing, they broke through the weakly defended pass at Gubeikou. The border wall northeast of the city must be reinforced, and the emperor has called on his brilliant military general Qi Jiguang – fresh from defending the coast from pirate attacks – to mastermind the work. Qi sets his workers to build huge watchtowers made of strong bricks all along the wall's length. The new towers will house dozens of battle-ready soldiers, securing the Great Wall against the northern nomads once again.

Yan Mountains
Gubeikou Great Wall
Barracks
Baked bricks
Qi Jiguang
Brick kilns
Brick-drying sheds
Military training
Supervising soldiers
Coal
Firewood
Riddle (sifting tool)
Kiln entrance
Winch
Unbaked bricks
Brick carriers
Mules carrying bricks

Mud is packed into a wooden mould to shape the bricks.

Can you spot this worker? He is pouring water over the bricks to cool them and make them stronger.

Workers form a human chain to pass bricks from hand to hand up the ramp.

Labourers use a winch to haul stone slabs up to the top of the wall.

With sheer drops on either side, the dangerous path along the Simatai Great Wall is not for the faint-hearted.

Quarrying stone is tough work in the midday sun.

Ingredients used to make the paste that binds the bricks include lime, clay – and sticky rice!

From the terraces of the Zhenbeitai Tower, guards can see far into enemy territory.

A trading party celebrates a successful negotiation.

A silk merchant from Suzhou shows off the quality of his fabrics to a group of merchants from western China.

Red Rock Canyon

Zhenbeitai Tower

Horse pen

Grain stores

Mongol cart train

Monks

Mongol tent (*ger*)

Grain seller

Guard

Blacksmith

Government inspector

Pancake stall

Horses for sale

Mongol travelers

An interested buyer inspects a horse's teeth to check its age and health.

Can you spot an old man collecting manure to sell as fuel?

A merchant haggles with a trader to get a better deal on his goods.

A sick merchant is consulting a local doctor for a cure.

The "Horse-Tea" Market
Yulin, 1610 CE

The Great Wall is now strong and secure but the Ming realize that peace with the Mongols will never last without diplomacy and trade. They set up "horse-tea" markets along the border, nicknamed after the most popular goods exchanged. The biggest is staged midway along the wall, watched over by the guards of the massive Zhenbeitai Tower. Twice a year, merchants flock here from all over China to exchange tea, medicines, alcohol, and silks with Mongol traders, whose fine horses, animal hides, and leather goods are sought after back home.

Sheep for sale

Corner turret

Kuangong City

Gate tower

Sentry tower

Yima City

Brick battlements

Guards

Wall made of rammed earth

Camel saddles

After being unloaded, the camels are taking a well-earned rest.

A vet is treating a sick cow.

A horse is rolling in the dust to soothe an itch.

Tired from his long journey across the desert, a merchant is asleep on top of his loaded cart.

Jiumenkou means “Nine Gates Pass”, after the number of arches in the bridge.

Soldiers hidden in the secret tunnel will jump out to attack invaders.

In battle, gates in the large fortresses on either side of the river can be opened to drown any enemies trapped inside.

Defending the Bridge

Jiumenkou Pass, 1644 CE

These are uneasy moments for the soldiers guarding the fortified bridge at the Jiumenkou Pass. An army of peasant rebels has stormed Beijing, and the emperor is dead. Tang Tong, once a trusted general, has defected to the rebels, and is advancing towards the bridge at the head of a massive army. As the distant war cries grow louder, the bridge defenders reach for their weapons and prepare to fight. Tang Tong’s advance will end in failure but it won’t be long before the Ming are under attack once more.

Rebels disguised as fishermen are planning to set fire to the bridge’s wooden gates.

The gates allow water to flow through while blocking enemy access.

Tang Tong has marched an army of 20,000 rebels across the mountains.

Can you find these defending soldiers fleeing to safety on the bridge?

The Ming generals meet to plan how to respond. They are confident the bridge defences can be held.

Yan Mountains

Rebel army

Patrol boat

Jiujiang River

Weapons stores

Barracks

Fortress

Fire for lighting cannons

Artillery

Messenger

Sulphur

Saltpetre

Charcoal

Three-barrelled guns

Military commanders

Horse ramp

Water gate

Fortress

Cannon

Charcoal, sulphur, and a chemical called saltpetre are mixed to make gunpowder.

A soldier wields his three-barrelled shotgun, a deadly weapon.

The Battle of Shanhai Pass

Shanhaiguan, 1644 CE

The Ming Dynasty has collapsed following a massive rebellion. The vast fortress of Shanhaiguan, near the coast, is its last remaining stronghold. Li Zicheng, chieftain of the rebel army now in control of Beijing, marches his troops to the edge of the walled city expecting little resistance. But the fortress's experienced military commander, Wu Sangui, has other ideas. Determined to prevent a siege, Wu leads his well-trained army out from the fortress gates and the two sides become locked in a ferocious battle.

Li Zicheng, once a poor shepherd, has crowned himself emperor of a new kingdom: the Shun Dynasty.

The walled city is heavily fortified, with high walls up to 7 m (20 ft) thick.

In the Drum and Bell Tower, the drum is beaten to signal that the city is in danger.

Weiyuan Tower

North gate

Yingen Tower

Mosque

West gate

Dragon King Temple

West garrison

Gongchen Gate

Shi River

Ming infantry

Ming cavalry

Shun infantry

Liu Zongmin, Shun general

Li Zicheng

Shun cavalry

Shun flag

Zhu Silang, the emperor's son

Wu Xiang, Wu Sangui's father

Niu Jinxing, Li's deputy

Wu Sangui

Li has angered Wu by taking his father, as well as the former emperor's son, hostage.

The Ming soldiers' families shelter from the fighting inside the fortress walls.

The mighty Zhendong Tower stands above the eastern gateway into imperial China. It is known as the “First Pass Under Heaven”.

The battle-hardened guards of the fortress keep watch for intruders.

Cannons are the Ming’s most effective weapon. Can you see this one being fired?

There are 56 windows in Jingbian Tower for archers to shoot at the enemy.

Can you spot the children pretending to be soldiers in the Wing City?

Jingbian Tower

Outer fortification

City walls

Stables

Toilet block

Inspection platform

Manchu cavalry

Shi River

General headquarters

Shun flag

Artillery

Messenger

Shun infantry

Manchu cavalry charge

The rebels begin to retreat when they see the Manchu cavalry advancing.

The Manchu warriors attack Li's troops using long lances.

The Nanyi Great Wall connects the walled city with Old Dragon's Head.

The Manchu officers hold their cavalry units back, waiting for the rebels to tire.

The Battle of Shanhai Pass *continued*

Shanhaiguan, 1644 CE

There is an even bigger threat to the Ming. To the northeast lie the lands of the Manchu people, descendents of the Jurchens, who have united and are poised to invade. Realizing that the days of the Ming are numbered, General Wu has made a secret alliance with the Manchu leader, Dorgon. He promises to hand over power if they help defeat the rebels. Wu opens the city gates to the Manchu army and they enter the battlefield. When a sudden wind whips up a sandstorm the Manchu cavalry, led by Dorgon's brothers, take advantage of the confusion. They charge Li's men and force them to flee back to Beijing.

Approaching sandstorm

Kitchens

Nanyi Great Wall

Dormitories

Wing City
(local military headquarters)

Messenger

Manchu
cavalry

Prince
Dodo

Prince
Ajige

Dorgon's brother, Prince Ajige, leads the Manchu cavalry charge. He is brave but not very clever.

Prince Dodo, another brother, is a ruthless commander.

Dorgon will rule China as regent for the new Qing emperor, his nephew, who is just five years old.

Manchu men braid their hair in a long ponytail called a *queue*.

Can you spot a Manchu horseman riding up a ramp inside the fortress?

The weaponry on show includes missiles that can be hurled at enemies below.

The fortress bears the flags of the Plain White Banner; this is one of the Manchu army's eight banners (divisions), each of which is named after its flag colour.

The Battle of Shanhai Pass *continued*

Shanhaiguan, 1644 CE

At the Old Dragon's Head fortress, the Great Wall meets the sea. After the triumph over the peasant rebels, General Wu's soldiers join the Manchu army and Dorgon arrives at the sea fortress to inspect his victorious troops from the ramparts. From here they will go on to force Li Zicheng out of Beijing and establish a new dynasty – the Qing. It is the end for the Great Wall as a military barrier. Now the land on both sides of the wall belongs to the Manchu, and its defences are abandoned.

Battle platform

Bohai Gulf

Cannon

Flag of the Plain White Banner

Battle platform

The sea fortress gets its name because it appears like a giant dragon's head jutting out into the ocean.

The Manchu cavalrymen wear feathers in their helmets and metal medallions on their tunics.

Large boulders protect the fortress from the crashing waves.

The fortress's wooden gate towers need frequent repainting.

An official clears the path as musicians play a fanfare to welcome a Western explorer.

A woman bellows at the workmen to stop making so much noise. They were supposed to finish a week ago.

A traveller takes a photo with his new camera, causing a local who is suspicious of this unfamiliar machine to run away in fear.

The fortress commander prepares to greet an explorer from the West.

A merchant has parked his camel train outside a noodle restaurant.

A convict is led through the gate on the way to prison.

This long-barrelled rifle needs two people to operate it.

The Greatest Pass Under Heaven

Jiayu Pass, 1880 CE

At the far western end of the Great Wall, beneath the snowcapped Qilian Mountains, the ancient fortress guarding the narrow Jiayu Pass is the most formidable of them all. It is known as the "First and Greatest Pass Under Heaven". Everyone passing through the region must stop at the checkpoint here, and merchants travelling the Silk Road are taxed on their goods. The Qing Dynasty have only recently opened China's borders to foreign visitors, and for intrepid travellers from the West, this remote desert outpost is a thrilling first glimpse of an empire most people have only read about in books.

Guanghua Gate Tower
Guanghua Gate
Fortress commander's office
Noodle restaurant
Tea stall
Blacksmith
Kitchen
Soldiers lifting weights
Sheep pen
Toilets
Fortune teller
Melon stall
Porter
Piglets
Pigsty
Parade ground
Musket practice
Wrestling match
Combat practice
Guesthouse
Drying foods
Guards' dormitory
Hoisting building materials
Wall repairs
Rifles
Stable
Bricklayer
Mud bricks
Workers sawing wood

Can you see a young mother on horseback taking her baby home from market?

A wrestling match between two soldiers attracts a crowd of onlookers.

Long abandoned, the Ming-era fortress is now in poor repair.

Prince Scipione Borghese, an Italian aristocrat, has the most powerful car and is in the lead.

A wealthy young man discusses motoring with the prince.

Can you spot a dog barking at the noisy engine?

Battlements

Tumu Fortress wall

Sentry post

Ox-drawn wagon

Camel train

Prince Scipione Borghese

Interpreter

Camel-drawn wagon

Itala car (Italy)

Young official

Charles Godard

Auguste Pons

Paper toys

Contal cyclecar (France)

Workers

A labourer prepares some ropes in case the cars get stuck in the mud.

An excited young official asks to be taken for a ride.

Camels have brought fuel from Beijing.

In second place is the Dutch car, driven by a charming but penniless con artist who will later be arrested!

The Beijing to Paris Rally

Huailai, 1907 CE

The crumbling walls of the old Tumu Fortress have witnessed some spectacles in their time, but nothing as extraordinary as this. Five noisy motor cars have sputtered into town, each driven by an eccentric European. The cars are racing from Beijing to far-off Paris in France – an almost impossible journey, with few roads and countless obstacles. No one has ever attempted anything like it before. As the drivers prepare to resume their journey, the locals gather in wonder at these strange new machines.

Fortress gate

Water spout

Corner turret

Spyker car (Netherlands)

De-Dion Bouton car (France)

Georges Cormier

"Beijing to Paris"

北京 巴黎

De-Dion Bouton car (France)

Journalist

Victor Collignon

Local official

Soldier

Sedan chair

Travelling barber

A little boy sitting on his father's shoulders points at the car's steering wheel.

A senior official watches the commotion from the comfort of his sedan chair.

A journalist accompanies one of the French drivers. He's sending updates on the race to his newspaper in Paris.

A visitor takes a photo of actors dressed in period costume.

The words of famous writers who have passed through are etched onto stone tablets.

The Yan Lou watchtower has been made into a museum.

Can you spot a young art student sketching a soldier?

This visitor has never mounted a horse before. It's harder than it looks!

A young boy is racing his friend the length of the battlements.

Volunteers lend a hand picking up litter dropped by tourists.

Yanmen Pass, or "Wild Goose Gate", is named after the geese who visit the area.

The Great Wall Today

Yanmen Pass, 2022 CE

For 2,000 years the Yanmen Pass protected one of the most important gateways into China. In countless battles, soldiers fought bravely to defend it. Nowadays its defensive role is ancient history and the mountain pass – like many other sites along the Great Wall – is a magnet for tourists. In recent years, the Ming-era battlements, gates, and watchtowers have been beautifully restored, making it easy for visitors to imagine what life must have been like for the soldiers guarding this lonely outpost on China's great frontier.

Yanmen Mountains
Weiyuan Gate Tower
Shops
Xicheng Gate
Ningbian Gate Tower
Weapons stand
Military Museum
School group
Information board
War drum
Cannon
Tour guide
Study group
Volunteers
Hikers
Battlements
Dili Gate

Two backpackers have been hiking along the wall for a week – it's been an amazing trip!

The tour guide's entertaining stories bring the history of the tower alive.

In Ming days, the war drum was beaten to warn of danger. These days, the only danger is falling off the battlements!

The Great Wall Through the Ages

Many dynasties contributed to the network of defensive barriers we call the Great Wall of China. The remains of all these individual structures now total 21,196km (13,170 miles).

EASTERN ZHOU DYNASTY (770–256 BCE)

Early Walls

Long before China became a large empire, the ancient Chinese built walls around their homes, farms, villages, and towns to keep out strangers and wild animals. Around 656 BCE, the kingdom of Chu – one China's many small states – built a number of square forts along its border and connected them with ramparts. This was the first long wall.

Warring States

By the 5th century BCE, larger kingdoms had swallowed up weaker ones, and by 300 BCE only seven rival states remained. The kingdoms of Qin, Zhao, and Yan built long walls to protect themselves from attacks by nomadic tribes in the north, as well as from each other. In 230 BCE, Ying Zheng, the ruthless king of the Qin, set about conquering each remaining kingdom one by one.

QIN DYNASTY (221–206 BCE)

China unified

Ying Zheng defeated the last of the rival states in 221 BCE, uniting China for the first time. He declared himself emperor under the name Qin Shi Huang and brought in reforms, such a single currency, to bring his empire together.

Northern Attacks

But China still faced a threat from its northern enemies. In 214 BCE, the emperor sent General Meng Tian to drive them out, and to keep them away he ordered the existing Zhao, Yan, and Qin walls to be linked together to form one long barrier.

The Endless Wall

It took nine years for one million workers to build new defences to connect the walls. Many thousands died in terrible conditions. When it was finished, the Qin wall stretched for 3,000km (1,850 miles). It became known as the "Endless Wall".

HAN DYNASTY (206 BCE–220 CE)

A Peace Deal

After Qin Shi Huang's death, an uprising led to a new dynasty seizing power – the Han. Meanwhile, the northern tribes united as the Xiongnu Empire, and continued their attacks. To secure lasting peace, many Han rulers were forced to offer a Han princess to each Xiongnu leader as a bride, and send gifts.

The Empire Expands

In 141 BCE, a new emperor came to power, determined to end this humiliation. Emperor Wudi sent his generals on long expeditions to force out the Xiongnu. He expanded his empire to the north and west, and rebuilt and extended the Qin wall to protect it. When construction finished, the Han wall stretched for more than 7,200km (4,500 miles).

The Silk Road

The Han conquest of new lands made it possible to travel all the way from China to Europe, opening up the trading route known as the Silk Road. Chinese merchants grew rich selling luxury goods, and ideas spread along the route, too – Buddhism was introduced from India. To protect trade, new fortifications were built at key points along the wall.

THREE KINGDOMS TO THE TANG (220–907 CE)

Period of Disunion

After the fall of the Han Dynasty, three different warlords claimed power. For several centuries China descended into civil war – an era known as the Period of Disunion. Existing walls deteriorated until the Northern Dynasties period (420–581 CE), when several rival kingdoms built new sections to protect themselves from invasion.

Sui Dynasty

The fighting came to an end when the Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE) took power, reuniting China once again. The ruthless Emperor Yang forced a million labourers to renovate the wall. Again, many didn't survive.

Tang Dynasty

The Sui Dynasty was short-lived, but under the long rule of the powerful Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), Chinese culture blossomed. The Tang built alliances with the northern nomads, bringing peace. Trade along the Silk Road reached its peak, and brought prosperity. During this Golden Age, the Great Wall lay mostly abandoned.

THE LIAO TO THE YUAN DYNASTIES (916–1368 CE)

Song Rule

The Tang fell, and in the northeast borderlands a nomad group called the Qidans united to establish the Liao Dynasty in 916 CE. The Han Chinese people now had less territory but continued to rule in the south under the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE). Most of the Great Wall now lay far to the north, outside their lands.

Jin Dynasty

In 1115 CE, another northeastern group called the Jurchens toppled the Liao and founded the Jin Dynasty. Work soon began on a new wall, made of earth, with a trench dug alongside. The Jin fought wars against the Song, gaining territory, but their power was not to last.

Mongol conquest

To the north of the Jin Empire, the nomadic tribes that had for so long launched raids on China were brilliantly united under Genghis Khan. In 1207 CE, his Mongol cavalry first attacked the lands south of the border. By 1279 CE, the Mongol conquest was complete. All of China now lay in the hands of the Mongols, who ruled as the Yuan Dynasty.

MING DYNASTY (1368–1644)

Chinese rule restored

After four centuries of nomadic rule in the north, the Han Chinese people finally re-established control of China. Determined to prevent further invasion, the Ming began the most ambitious Great Wall construction project ever seen, which continued throughout their rule.

The Ming Great Wall

The techniques and materials the Ming used were far more advanced than anything ever seen before. To better protect the capital, Beijing, they built a strong new wall of stone and brick, and reinforced it with new battlements, large watchtowers, and military fortresses. In places, the wall reached up to 8 m (25 ft) high, and was wide enough for five horses to ride side by side. At 8,850km (5,500 miles), the Ming wall was the longest ever built, and many of its remains are still preserved today.

Downfall of the Ming

To pay for the wall, the Ming raised huge taxes, and in time – facing hardship and famine – the people rebelled. As the Ming Dynasty fell apart, another powerful group from the northeast – the Manchus – took advantage of the chaos. In 1644, a Ming general allowed the Manchu cavalry to enter China through a gate in the wall, and the Manchus quickly overthrew the Ming.

QING DYNASTY TO TODAY (1644–present)

The Wall Abandoned

The Qing Dynasty, set up by the Manchus, now ruled over a much larger empire, and the border shifted far to the north of the Great Wall. Confident in their power, the new rulers didn't see much point in renovating the wall. Its defences were abandoned and it fell into disrepair.

The Modern Era

In the 1950s, the Chinese government started to preserve and restore the Great Wall, and began opening it up to tourism. In 1987, it was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and now millions of tourists visit various parts of it every year. Yet the wall is under threat. Over the centuries, many people have taken its bricks for their own buildings, and natural forces have also taken their toll. The government has passed laws to prevent people damaging the wall, and is now using modern technology to help conserve it, so that this ancient wonder can be enjoyed by future generations.

Time-Travelling Quiz

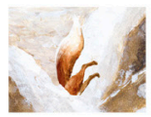
Search through the pages of the book to see what Hong Yu, our cunning, time-travelling fox, is getting up to.

Pages 4–5

Hong Yu has concealed herself in the grass. What is she hiding from?

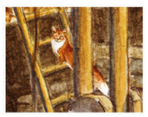
Pages 6–7

Our red fox has found a place by the wall to rest. Can you spot her?



Pages 8–9

Hong Yu is excited by the snow. What might she be looking for buried below?



Pages 10–11

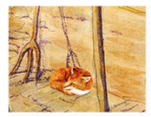
What will Hong Yu find when she reaches the top of the ladder?

Pages 12–13

Time-travelling is thirsty work in this heat! Where's Hong Yu having a drink?

Pages 14–15

Our greedy fox has followed her nose to the kitchen. Can you find her?

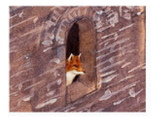


Pages 16–17

She's snoozing in the sun close to a food vendor. What has she just eaten?

Pages 18–19

The clever fox has been climbing ladders again. Where is she now?



Pages 20–21

Hong Yu's on a secret mission. Who is she spying on?

Pages 22–23

Delicious food is never far away at a market. What's on the menu today?

Pages 24–25

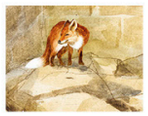
Hong Yu has found a place to hide. But how is she going to get out?

Pages 26–27

Hong Yu needs to find her way back into the fortress. How will she get in?

Pages 28–29

Hong Yu's caught up in the fighting and needs help! Can you see her?



Pages 30–31

Our fox is safe but wants to avoid the soldiers. Where's she got to now?

Pages 32–33

A fox needs some shade on a hot day. But which pillar is she behind?

Pages 34–35

Hong Yi is off on her travels again. Which team is she helping?

Pages 36–37

Our favourite fox has made it to the present day. Where's she off to next?

Glossary

Alliance An agreement between people or countries to work together to achieve a shared goal.

Arrow slit An small opening in a building through which an archer can shoot arrows.

Artillery The part of an army that uses large weapons such as cannons.

Barbican A defensive tower at the entrance to a fortress.

Barracks The building or group of buildings where soldiers live.

Battle platform A raised structure along the Great Wall from which defenders could keep a lookout for the enemy or launch an attack.

Battlements A wall around the top of a fortification with openings for defenders to shoot through.

BCE Before Common Era (see CE).

Beacon tower A tower used to send information by smoke or fire signals.

Buddhist A person who follows the teachings of Buddhism, one of the world's major religions.

Caravan A group of people travelling together for safety, often using pack animals such as camels.

Cavalry The part of an army that fights on horseback.

CE Common Era. The years from 1 CE to the present day.

Convict A person who is serving a prison sentence.

Courtier The advisors and favourites of a king or queen.

Dynasty A series or rulers from the same family, who pass power down from generation to generation.

Frontier The border between two countries.

Garrison A group of soldiers stationed in a fortress or town to defend it.

Gate tower A building above a gate used as a watchtower or as a base to defend against attack.

Han people The ethnic group that makes up the majority of the Chinese population. Starting with the Han Dynasty, Han people ruled China for long periods of its history.

Infantry The part of army that fights on foot.

Inscription Writing that is carved into something such as a stone tablet.

Jurchen people An ethnic group who lived in northeastern China and ruled the country as the Jin Dynasty from 1115 to 1234 CE.

Kiln A large, very hot oven used to bake and dry bricks or clay.

Lady-in-waiting A female attendant to a queen or princess at court.

Lime A white substance used to make the mortar (paste) that binds bricks together.

Manchu people An ethnic group descended from the Jurchen people who ruled China from 1644 to 1912 CE as the Qing Dynasty.

Mongol people An ethnic group from northern China and modern-day Mongolia. Historically, the Mongols were nomadic tribespeople. They united as the Mongol Empire and ruled China as the Yuan Dynasty from 1271 to 1368 CE.

Nomad A person who moves from place to place rather than living in one location. Nomads are usually animal herders.

Parapet A low wall around the top of a fortification.

Pass A narrow route between mountains. Mountain passes were heavily guarded along the Great Wall, with checkpoints to control the entry and exit of people and goods.

Peasant A poor person with few rights who works on the land.

Rammed earth A building method in which wet earth and other materials are rammed hard into the ground with a special tool. This method was used to build many sections of the Great Wall.

Ramparts The earth walls of a fortification, usually with stone walls on top of them.

Regent A person who governs a country in place of the official ruler, usually because the official ruler is too young or ill to rule themselves.

Sedan chair An enclosed chair that is mounted on poles and carried by two people.

Sentry A soldier who guards entry to a building or other place.

Shaman A priest or healer believed to have a special connection with the spirit world.

Shrine A sacred place devoted to a specific holy person, god, or object.

Shuttlecock A small object made from overlapping feathers fixed to a cork or rubber base.

Siege A military operation in which soldiers surround a place in order to force the people inside it to surrender.

Silk Road An important overland trade route through Central Asia, named after China's most valuable export.

Sluice gate A barrier across a water current that controls its flow.

Stronghold A fortress, or a place with strong defences.

Tannery A place where animal skins are treated with chemicals to make them into leather.

Trench A long channel dug in the ground by soldiers to protect themselves from the enemy.

Tunic An item of clothing worn on the top part of the body.

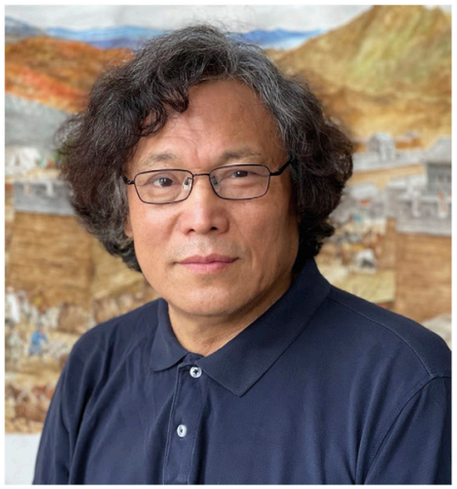
Turret A small tower built at the corner of a fortification.

Winch A device used to lift heavy objects by winding a rope around a drum.

Xiongnu Nomadic people from northern China, who united under Modun Shanyu and formed an empire in the late 3rd century BCE.

The Illustrator

Du Fei was born in Beijing, and has almost 30 years' experience as a professor of mural painting and artistic creation. He specializes in painting realistic works portraying Chinese history and traditional culture. His work encompasses a variety of art forms, from murals and oil painting to sculpture and ceramics, and has been displayed in public spaces including museums, stadiums, parks, and subways. His best-known works include *The Development of Textile and Clothing in Ancient China* and *The Great Cathay*. He also illustrated DK's *China Through Time*.



The Consultant

William Lindesay OBE made a journey of 2,470km (1,535 miles) on foot along the Great Wall in 1987. He settled in China in 1990 to explore, research, and contribute to the conservation of the monument. He has since written seven books, curated ten exhibitions and presented the Great Wall story through a number of internationally broadcast documentaries.